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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/259,762	03/01/1999	ZHIPING YIN	303.531US1	5661

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EXAMINER

DIAZ, JOSE R

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2815

DATE MAILED: 03/10/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/259,762

Applicant(s)

YIN ET AL.

Examiner

José R Diaz

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 16 December 2002.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3, 5-11 and 21-40 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3, 5-11, 21-40 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Objections

➤ Applicant is advised that should claims 1-3 and 5-11 be found allowable, claims 21-40 will be objected to under 37 CFR 1.75 as being a substantial duplicate thereof. When two claims in an application are duplicates or else are so close in content that they both cover the same thing, despite a slight difference in wording, it is proper after allowing one claim to object to the other as being a substantial duplicate of the allowed claim. See MPEP § 706.03(k).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

➤ The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

➤ Claims 1-3, 5-11 and 21-40 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. The amended claim 1 and the new claims 21 and 31 recite the new limitation of "an atmosphere free of argon." After a carefully review of the Specification, the Examiner concluded that the Specification does not support such a limitation. For instance, on page 4, lines 21-23 and page 6, lines 4-5 of the Specification, Applicant clearly discloses a process in which oxygen and "an inert gas" are used to treat the substrate to prevent profile distortion

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such as footing or undercutting. The art defines the term "inert gas" as a gas formed from the group VIII A, which includes Argon (Ar). Thus, nowhere in the Specification Applicant states that the atmosphere used to treat the substrate is free of an inert gas such as Argon. As a matter of fact, the Specification supports the use of the inert gas such as Argon. Therefore, for purpose of examination the claimed atmosphere will be treated as an atmosphere having an inert gas such as Argon. Claims 2-3, 5-11, 22-30 and 32-40 are rejected due to their dependency on claim 1, 21 and 31.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

➤ The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

The changes made to 35 U.S.C. 102(e) by the American Inventors Protection Act of 1999 (AIPA) do not apply to the examination of this application as the application being examined was not (1) filed on or after November 29, 2000, or (2) voluntarily published under 35 U.S.C. 122(b). Therefore, this application is examined under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) prior to the amendment by the AIPA (pre-AIPA 35 U.S.C. 102(e)).

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➤ Claims 1-2, 5 and 9-11 are still rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Puntambekar (US Pat. No. 5,821,603). See Office action filed on Paper No. 11.

➤ Claims 21-22, 24, 28-32, 34, and 38-40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Puntambekar (US Pat. No. 5,821,603).

Claims 21 and 31 recite the same limitations stated in claim 1. As such, the rejection made for claim 1 also applies to claims 21 and 31.

Claims 22 and 32 recite the same limitations stated in claim 2. As such, the rejection made for claim 2 also applies to claims 22 and 32.

Claims 24 and 34 recite the same limitations stated in claim 5. As such, the rejection made for claim 5 also applies to claims 24 and 34.

Claims 28 and 38 recite the same limitations stated in claim 9. As such, the rejection made for claim 9 also applies to claims 28 and 38.

Claims 29 and 39 recite the same limitations stated in claim 10. As such, the rejection made for claim 10 also applies to claims 29 and 39.

Claims 30 and 40 recite the same limitations stated in claim 11. As such, the rejection made for claim 11 also applies to claims 30 and 40.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

➤ The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

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(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

➤ Claims 3 and 6-8 are still rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Puntambekar (US Pat. No. 5,821,603). See Office action filed on Paper No. 11.

➤ Claims 23, 25-27, 33, and 35-37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Puntambekar (US Pat. No. 5,821,603).

Claims 23 and 33 recite the same limitations stated in claim 3. As such, the rejection made for claim 3 also applies to claims 23 and 33.

Claims 25 and 35 recite the same limitations stated in claim 6. As such, the rejection made for claim 6 also applies to claims 25 and 35.

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Claims 26 and 36 recite the same limitations stated in claim 7. As such, the rejection made for claim 7 also applies to claims 26 and 36.

Claims 27 and 37 recite the same limitations stated in claim 8. As such, the rejection made for claim 8 also applies to claims 27 and 37.

Response to Arguments

➤ Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-3, 5-11 and 21-40 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

➤ The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Yin et al. (US Pat. No. 6,291,363 B1) is related to the present invention.

➤ Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any

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extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Correspondence

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to José R Díaz whose telephone number is (703) 308-6078. The examiner can normally be reached on 9:00-5:00 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eddie Lee can be reached on (703) 308-1690. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 308-7722 for regular communications and (703) 746-3891 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0956.

JRD
March 5, 2003



EDDIE LEE
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2800